

House Blocks Bush's Effort to Force through Trade Agreement

While Ignoring U.S. Workers

Washington, D.C. – Today, Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-04) rejected President Bush's demand that Congress approve his Colombia Free Trade Agreement within 60 days. She voted with a majority of U.S. House members to pass H.R. 1092, a resolution postponing consideration of the agreement until President Bush abandons his divisive approach and works with Congress to address America's more pressing economic needs.

"With our economy in recession, the first priority of Congress should be providing relief to Americans who are struggling to hold on to their jobs and homes, not President Bush's Colombia trade deal," McCollum said. "A President who has rejected every effort to assist U.S. workers harmed by his past trade policies is in no position to demand that Congress approve this agreement without any consultation or oversight."

President Bush negotiated and submitted the Colombia Free Trade Agreement without consulting House and Senate Democratic leaders. The deal will have minimal positive impact on the U.S. economy while sacrificing U.S. leverage over a Colombian government that has yet to reign in drug-funded terrorist groups, halt widespread murders of union organizers, or address the highest rate of internally displaced peoples in the world after Sudan.

On Tuesday, the President sent his partisan version of the Colombia Trade Agreement to Congress under “Fast Track” rules that forbid changes to the legislation and mandate an up-or-down vote within 60 days. In response, the House of Representatives exercised its authority to reject Fast Track and restore the full process of congressional consideration for the trade deal.

###